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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7369th meeting

Wednesday, 28 January 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/48, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

I now give the floor to Ms. Kang.

Ms. Kang: On behalf of Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Emergency Relief Coordinator, I have the honour to deliver the following statement.

Syria is entering its fifth year of conflict characterized by extreme violence and brutality. Resolution 2139 (2014) called for an end to the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment and the use of barrel bombs, But the call continues to be ignored. The Government has continued to conduct airstrikes, including barrel bombs, in densely populated areas. Between 21 and 26 January, Government airstrikes on East Ghouta in Rural Damascus reportedly killed nearly 100 people and injured scores more. Armed opposition groups and designated terrorist organizations have also continued to use explosive weapons in populated areas. A barrage of around 50 rockets and mortars killed at least seven and injured 50 in Damascus city on 25 January.

Infrastructure for essential services continues to come under deliberate and indiscriminate attack. For example, for nearly two weeks, the Al-Nusra Front has cut water supplies to Idlib city, affecting some 600,000 people. In response, local Government authorities are preventing the delivery of aid to opposition-controlled areas.

Hospitals and schools have not been spared. Physicians for Human Rights documented eight attacks on medical facilities during December, six of them by Government forces. They also documented the deaths of seven medical personnel during the same period, all killed by Government forces, including three who were reportedly tortured to death and one who was executed. At least three schools were reportedly hit by Government airstrikes in Idlib governorate in December, killing nine children and injuring many others.

Meanwhile, the atrocities meted out by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued in areas under its control, including numerous reports of executions, including by stoning and throwing victims from buildings. Its brutal subjugation of women and girls is particularly heinous, and the fate of the women sold into sexual slavery remains deeply concerning.

The relentless violence and destruction in Syria has led to one of the worst displacements of people the world has seen in decades. There are 7.6 million people displaced within the country. Many have been displaced multiple times from one unsafe area to the next. In addition, there are 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries.

Humanitarian organizations continue to strive to help people in desperate need despite the extremely difficult and unsafe operating environment inside the country. Food was distributed to over 3.6 million people in December, emergency non-food items were provided to over 500,000, water and sanitation interventions were provided for approximately 1.5 million and medical assistance was afforded for over 680,000 persons via regular, cross-line and cross-border deliveries. In addition, international and Syrian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) reached 1.5 million people across all sectors.

United Nations cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan into Syria continued to increase. As of 26 January, 59 shipments had been made under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). Those deliveries provided food assistance for over 702,000 people, non-food items for over 615,000, water and sanitation supplies for 311,000 and medical supplies for over 468,000. The World Food Programme reached 315,000 people in rural parts of Dar'a, Quneitra, Idlib and eastern Aleppo city in December via cross-border operations. It plans to scale up further next month, but needs more funds to do so.

Despite those efforts, the needs continue to outpace the response. Approximately 4.8 million people — about 40 per cent of the total 12.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance — are residing in areas where they struggle to receive basic services and staples, and where humanitarian access remains a significant challenge. Access to ISIL-controlled Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor is particularly concerning. United Nations agencies were unable to deliver food to the entire caseload of 600,000 people in those two governorates in December due to lack of agreement with armed groups on the ground. Many local NGOs in Raqqa have put humanitarian activities on hold, and in the past week some humanitarian organizations in the governorate were closed.

We regret to report that no progress has been achieved on the inclusion of surgical supplies in cross-line humanitarian convoys. In December, injectable medicines and surgical supplies were denied to areas in eastern Ghouta. In January, despite the support of the governor of Homs, Government security forces removed all surgical items, diarrhoea kits, midwifery kits and reproductive health kits from the interagency convoy to Al-Wa'er, in breach of international humanitarian law.

Some 212,000 people are still besieged, 185,500 people by Government forces and 26,500 people by opposition forces, with limited aid reaching only two locations since 1 December. Beginning on 24 December, some 9,000 people, including children and sick and wounded civilians, were able to evacuate towns in eastern Ghouta, some of them reportedly from besieged areas, as a result of local agreements between the parties. We have consistently reported on the severity of conditions inside eastern Ghouta, where aid deliveries continue to be heavily restricted. In 2014, 16 requests to the Government for interagency convoys to eastern Ghouta were made, only four of which were carried out. The remaining 12 were unanswered, denied or subjected to conditions that could not be accommodated. This past week, a further four requests were made to reach the area, and we await a response.

No assistance has reached the Yarmouk camp for Palestinians since 6 December due to ongoing fighting inside and around the camp. Previous deliveries were already sporadic and insufficient to constitute sustained and adequate coverage of the needs of some 18,000 people inside the camp.

Although one additional international non-governmental organization was approved in January, there has been no progress on addressing the administrative constraints placed on international NGOs by the Government of Syria. International NGOs have vast experience and much needed capacity, making them a crucial partner in the effort to meet the ever-growing needs in Syria.

In order for humanitarian agencies to continue their work, more funding is urgently required. The Syria response is now contained in a single plan and appeal and includes assistance both from within the country and through cross-border operations. The response to people inside Syria requires $2.9 billion this year. Last year, we received 48 per cent of the amount requested. A lack of funding — for example, for the winterization programme — means that hundreds of thousands of the 3.3 million people targeted for assistance have not received assistance during this particularly harsh winter.

In conclusion, the Council must find a way to end the conflict in Syria. At the beginning of the conflict, nearly four years ago, 1 million people needed humanitarian assistance inside the country. Today, that figure stands at 12.2 million, and 3.8 million people have fled to neighbouring countries. We must not allow the world to forget Syria and the atrocities being committed against its people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Haydar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Based on the constitutional responsibilities of the Syrian Government vis-à-vis its citizens and its firm position in confronting the terrorist war afflicting Syria, since 2011 the Government has devoted every national capacity to ensuring that the necessary

assistance, shelter, food and medication is provided to all citizens affected by the crimes perpetrated by armed terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government would like to stress its desire to continue to cooperate with the United Nations to ensure that assistance reaches all citizens in every part of Syria without discrimination. Therefore, on 17 December 2014, following consultations and an agreement with the United Nations, the Syrian Government adopted the Syria emergency response plan for 2015, which complemented the national efforts that have been made since the start of the crisis to lessen the suffering of our people and confront the terrorist attacks and the negative impact the foreign intervention in Syria's internal affairs has had.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to express its regret at the fact that those preparing the texts of the relevant draft resolutions have taken unconstructive position vis-à-vis the humanitarian situation in Syria. They have insisted on politicizing this issue and have ignored all the facts and developments on the ground. They have used the same stereotypical language in the report (S/2015/48) and ignored the fact that the humanitarian situation and its deterioration are the result of terrorist attacks by armed terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government would like to stress once again that, without its efforts and cooperation with United Nations agencies and specialized entities, as well as its direct coordination between the parties, and without the support and protection it has provided to United Nations convoys and staff, the Organization would not have been able to deliver any humanitarian assistance at all. To set the record straight, I should stress that since December 2014, as documented by United Nations entities, 6 million people have benefited from food aid, and approximately half a million from medical assistance, from inside Syria. The facts on the ground show that cross-border delivery has been ineffective when it comes to achieving the humanitarian goals that resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) claim to want to achieve, particularly considering the fact that Syria has repeatedly emphasized its readiness to deliver assistance from inside Syria.

We are all now aware that any measures designed to improve the humanitarian situation without consultation and close cooperation with the Government of Syria will not succeed. Those attempting to politicize the humanitarian situation must cease immediately. Such efforts are desperate attempts to violate our Government's sovereignty. We have read the eleventh report of the Secretary-General and our comments on it have been officially submitted to the Security Council. The Government would like to emphasize the incontrovertible truth that the humanitarian situation in Syria cannot be improved without giving priority to the following issues.

First, serious work must be done, in coordination with the Syrian Government, to deal with the fundamental reason for the humanitarian crisis in some regions of Syria, that is, the crimes committed by armed terrorist groups being supported in the region and internationally, including groups related to Al-Qaida and those that are either overtly or covertly connected to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups.

Secondly, we stress the importance of — indeed, the need for — ensuring that the Secretariat's policies are in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the norms governing humanitarian activities, as well as with the provisions of resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), which prioritize the fight against terrorism and terrorist groups, such as ISIL, the Al-Nusra Front and other related organizations. What is needed now is cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government in combating terrorism, with a particular view to ending the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Various parties, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, must end their support, financing and incitement of terrorism and drain the terrorist pond. The United Nations must improve its cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government instead of repeatedly casting doubt on its efforts to reach those affected within Syrian territory, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182.

It is also important to address the lack of financing, one of the fundamental obstacles to implementing the 2014 humanitarian response plan. In that context, I should emphasize that the Syrian Government has been working intensely to meet the needs of its citizens. The coercive, unilateral, illegitimate measures imposed by some countries on Syria, which have had a direct negative effect on Syrian livelihoods, must stop. They have affected many basic, vital sectors, such as health care, education and water and sanitation. In that regard, I refer to the report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs entitled World Economic Situation and

Prospects 2015, which mentions the negative effects of such measures on the livelihoods of Syrian citizens.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) should provide detailed lists of the items and various types of aid that are being sent across borders to various regions in Syria. It should also identify the parties who are receiving that aid, because we have information that aid such as this is reaching terrorist organizations. The Secretary-General's reports must be credible and transparent concerning mechanisms for monitoring cross-border assistance. The facts on the ground show that the United Nations does not have an effective mechanism for ensuring that aid reaches those who genuinely need it in areas controlled by terrorist groups. Turkey must stop using unofficial border crossings for delivering weapons and other lethal equipment and terrorists to Syria. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia must stop using border crossings used by OCHA to send weapons and assistance to the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups. The United Nations has a moral and political responsibility to ensure this. Its officials must stop making statements and producing reports with random, inaccurate and undocumented information on the humanitarian situation in Syria. That is politicization.

The fact that those who prepared today's report insist on using the terms "armed opposition", "non-State armed groups" or just "armed groups" in describing armed terrorist groups is reprehensible and runs counter to the statement in paragraph 10 of the report that Ahrar Al-Sham and Jaish Al-Islam have reached an agreement with the Al-Nusra Front, which is an organization on the Security Council's list. The Council itself has described such groups as terrorist organizations in the past. They use the area of separation as a haven, with clear cover by Israel. We all know now that whenever such terrorist groups fail to put their terrorist crimes into action or are pushed back by the Syrian army, Israel moves in and takes on that role with repeated acts of aggression against our country.

The Government of Syria would like to point out that the number of civilian victims of attacks by armed terrorist groups using various types of explosive ammunition in every governorate of Syria during the period from 21 November to 21 December 2014 totalled 238 dead and 377 injured, including 45 and 82 children, respectively. Those responsible for those acts of terrorism and other heinous crimes are armed terrorist groups, Wahabists trying to cloak themselves under the guise of terms such as "moderate armed opposition", in a desperate attempt to justify their terrorist acts.

My Government continues to take a responsible, effective role in supporting the United Nations in dealing with the humanitarian situation in Syria. That must be based on respect for Syrian sovereignty and full cooperation with my Government in combating terrorism and delivering humanitarian relief assistance.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.